

Message Text

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TAGS: PINT, SOPN, CA
SUBJ: TORONTO REACTION TO PRIME MINISTER'S CONSTITUTIONAL
PROPOSALS; ONTARIO ACTION ON LANGUAGE RIGHTS

1. THE TORONTO PRESS GENERALLY HAS REACTED NEGATIVELY TO PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU'S PACKAGE OF CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS EARLIER THIS WEEK. IN ADDITION, THE PREMIER OF ONTARIO NOTED THAT IT WOULD BE "HIGHLY REGRETTABLE" IF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CHOOSE TO MOVE UNILATERALLY TO REWRITE THE CANADIAN CONSTITUTION. WHILE PREMIER WILLIAM DAVIS SYMPATHIZED WITH THE PRIME MINISTER'S DESIRE TO SET A TIMETABLE FOR DISCUSSIONS, HE THOUGHT THE FEDERAL AUTHORITIES MOVING TO MAKE CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES WITHOUT GETTING THE APPROVAL OF THE PROVINCES "WOULD BE AN UNWISE COURSE TO FOLLOW."

2. THE TABLOID TORONTO SUN REACTED STRONGLY IN ITS EDITORIAL AND COLUMNS AGAINST THE PROPOSALS. IT WAS SUGGESTED THAT WHILE THE NEW CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS DO LITTLE, SHOULD THE CANADIAN PEOPLE RETURN TRUDEAU AND THE LIBERALS IN THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION, IT WILL BE THE BEGINNING OF THE END FOR CANADIAN DEMOCRACY ANYWAY.

3. THE TORONTO STAR CAME OUT AGAINST THE PROPOSALS TWO
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DAYS IN A ROW. IN AN EDITORIAL JUNE 13, THE STAR HELD THAT THE REORGANIZATION OF THE SENATE WAS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION BUT THAT THE LEGISLATIVE THRUST WAS INCOMPLETE UNLESS SIMILAR IMPROVEMENTS WERE MADE TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS. ON JUNE 14, THE STAR EDITORIAL "TRUDEAU'S NEW DEAL NOT ENOUGH" HELD THAT "UNLESS HE ADDS A LOT MORE FLESH TO ITS BONES THAN HE HAS SO FAR,

TRUDEAU'S CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS DON'T GO FAR ENOUGH TO DO THE JOB." THE STAR TOOK ISSUE ON LANGUAGE RIGHTS NOT GOING FAR ENOUGH, SUGGESTED THAT THE SENATE REFORM PROPOSAL WILL NOT FILL THE DESIRE OF THE PROVINCES FOR A GREATER VOICE OR PROVIDE A SATISFACTORY WAY OF RESOLVING FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL DISPUTES AND THAT THE PROPOSALS LACK AN "IMAGINATIVE SHARING OF POWERS BETWEEN OTTAWA AND THE PROVINCES." IN GENERAL THE STAR WANTED THE PRIME MINISTER TO GIVE MORE DETAILS AND TO TAKE "A BOLDER APPROACH THAN HE HAS SO FAR".

4. IN ITS COMMENTS ON LANGUAGE RIGHTS THE STAR POINTED OUT, AS SOME OF THE MEDIA HAVE RECENTLY, THAT ONTARIO PREMIER WILLIAM DAVIS' REFUSAL TO PERMIT LEGISLATION TO PASS IN THE ONTARIO LEGISLATURE "ENSHRINING" FRENCH LANGUAGE RIGHTS IN ONTARIO HARMS UNITY. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN CRITICISM OF DAVIS FOR HIS MOVE, NEWSPAPERS AS SUCH AS THE SPECTATOR OF HAMILTON HAVE PRAISED DAVIS FOR "STICKING TO HIS GUNS IN HIS OWN SENSIBLE PROGRAM OF GRADUALLY INTRODUCING MORE SERVICES IN FRENCH" AND SUCH OPINION HAS BEEN SHARED BY TORONTO STAR. TV/RADIO COLUMNIST DENNIS BRAITHWAITE, TORONTO SUN POLITICAL COLUMNIST CLAIRE HOY AND OTHER WRITERS IN THE PROVINCIAL PRESS.
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